

Message Text

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TAGS PINT, CO

SUBJ: PRESIDENTIAL RACE PICKS UP - TURBAY REBUTS LLERAS

1. EXPRES CARLOS LLERAS AND AMB TO THE US JULIO CESAR TURBAY, THE CURRENT FRONT-RUNNERS IN THE RACE FOR THE 1978 LIBERAL PARTY PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION, ENGAGED IN A HARSH LONG DISTANCE EXCHANGE DURING THE PAST WEEK. THE EVENT WAS INDICATIVE OF THE INCREASING TEMPO OF THE RUN FOR THE LIBERAL NOMINATION, OVER TWO YEARS BEFORE THE CONVENTION.

2. DURING A CAMPAIGN SWING THROUGH THE VALLE DEL CAUCA (CALI) REGION, CARLOS LLERAS HAD CHALLENGED TURBAY TO RETURN TO COLOMBIA, AVOW HIS CANDIDACY AND EXPLAIN HIS PROGRAMS. TURBAY, IN A TELEPHONE INTERVIEW WITH A CORRESPONDENT OF THE NATIONAL RADIO NETWORK, RETORTED THAT HIS ACTIONS IN PUBLIC LIFE WEREN'T DEPENDENT ON CARLOS LLERAS, REFUSED TO AVOW HIS CANDIDACY AND SAID THAT HE WOULD SPEAK OUT WHEN HE DEEMED IT APPROPRIATE TO DO SO. (LOCAL POLIT FIGURES HAVE TOLD EMBOFFS THAT TURBAY WILL RETURN SHORTLY AFTER THE NEW YEAR).

3. LLERAS, AT SIXTY SEVEN, CHERISHES TWO REMAINING POLIT GOALS: ANOTHER TERM AS PRES AND THE DEFLECTING OF JULIO CESAR TURBAY'S DRIVE FOR THAT OFFICE. LLERAS CONSIDERS TURBAY A SHALLOW, CONFIDENTIAL

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FACILE OPPORTUNIST AND BELIEVES THAT A TURBAY PRESIDENCY WOULD

BE DAMAGING TO THE NATION. HIS CHALLENGE TO TURBAY TO "EXPLAIN HIS PROGRAMS" MAY WELL REFLECT LLERAS' VIEW, ONCE EXPRESSED VEHEMENTLY TO EMBOFFS THAT TURBAY "HAS NO PROGRAM", AND THAT BEYOND A DESIRE FOR THE OFFICE, HE HAS NO WORTHWHILE PLANS TO IMPLEMENT IN THAT POSITION.

4. IN COLOMBIA WHERE POLITICIANS HAVE NO FEAR OF "PEAKING EARLY," THE RACE FOR THE 1978 LIBERAL NOMINATION, WHICH AT THIS POINT APPEARS TO BE EQUIVALENT TO ELECTION, IS GATHERING BOTH MOMENTUM AND MASS. WHILE LLERAS AND TURBAY ARE FAR IN FRONT, OTHER CANDIDACIES INCLUDING THOSE OF FORNMIN LIEVANO AND LABMIN DE CROVO HAVE BEEN PROPOSED ALTHOUGH NEITHER CABINET MEMBER HAS YET TO ACKNOWLEDGE OR PURSUE HIS CANDIDACY. VAKY

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